

JOSEPH OF NAZARETH

HERO · HUSBAND · OBEDIENT SERVANT



ROBERT H. FLORES



*This booklet is dedicated to all husbands who love their
wives unconditionally.*



JOSEPH OF NAZARETH

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Joseph was an average man; a normal man with normal feelings. He had been in love with a young teenager named, Mary. This was the only woman he ever wanted to marry. That's why he had been single for so long. He was a man of high ideals; a religious man. He loved the LORD. He knew the kind of woman he wanted and stayed a bachelor well into his twenties until he found her. Having waited so long to marry was already a social stigma; people talked behind his back, perhaps putting the pressure on him.

One day, he looked up from his carpenter's bench and saw Mary walking by, his heart leaped for joy. Boy, that first encounter—that first conversation with her—was amazing! They became good friends and talked with each other. They were falling in love. Over the course of a few months they made plans for their future. Sitting under the stars one night, he asked Mary for her hand in marriage.

She began to cry and said, "Absolutely, Joseph. There is no other man like you. You are just and you love God with your whole heart. I know that you will obey His commandments no matter what it costs you."

They kept their proposal a secret initially. Joseph knew that he needed to ask Mary's father's permission to marry her. He needed to get in good with her family. It was essential that he worked harder, longer hours. He built chairs, cabinets, tables, doors, anything that could provide some money for their future. Each day passed so quickly, he sometimes would work well into the evening, by candlelight. The time came for him to ask Mary's father's permission. A dinner was set up between the families. Joseph had all his answers memorized for her father: telling him that the room attached to his father's house was almost completed, how much money he had saved, how much he loved her, how much he longed to spend his life with her, how he would protect her and provide for her. Joseph's answers were delivered flawlessly and her father was pleased. He gave them his blessing. Mary's father saw the heart of this hard-working, godly man and joyously gave his permission. A short ceremony took place two days later and they were officially "married", though, in

our culture, we would call this “engagement”. In those days, you were married for a year before you were to consummate the marriage bodily. Everything was well on their way to a happy future. Their marriage truly looked bright to everyone around them.

However, trouble soon came. It was in this “engagement” period that Mary was discovered to be pregnant. Mary defended herself by saying God was the One that did it. Joseph had never heard such blasphemy. Anger raged inside of him when he saw her pregnant for the first time. His anger was too much to bear and he simply threw his arms up in the air and walked out of her parents’ house.

One night, in his carpenter’s shop, he thought to himself, “How could I have been so wrong about this girl? I waited my whole life to find a perfect wife and she goes and sins against me!? Who’s the father? I know I’m not! How could she do this to me? How could she break her promise to me? She has broken my heart!”

He took one of his chairs and smashed it up against the wall. He kicked his tools and cleared his workbench of all the wood. Nothing mattered anymore. He had been betrayed by his wife. The broken wood furniture was nothing compared to his broken heart.

He just stood there in disgust at the thought of her, “Here I thought she loved me. . . what a joke! She probably just makes empty promises to any man that comes along. . . Well, it’s over with. I should have known it was too good to be true.”

He went to bed that night, crying to himself profusely, “How could you do this to me, God!? Is this what I get for being a righteous man? Is this what I get for my tithing, sacrificing and studying your Law? How could you let this happen?!”

Joseph wept bitterly. The situation was hopeless. A very sleepless night followed as he tossed and turned in anger and frustration.

He thought of the friction his family and Mary's family now had. Joseph's family wanted an immediate divorce, whereas Mary's family threatened legal action, wanting to take Joseph to the authorities for "humbling their daughter". Joseph's friends took him away from the scene to comfort him saying, "Don't worry about it, Joseph. Forget her. She made her decision. There's thousands of women out there for you. You don't need her!"

One night, as he lay in his almost-finished room, he looked up at the stars. "I never asked for any of this chaos," he mumbled to himself. "I was simply living my holy life and then this happened! Do you even care about this mess, God?"

He couldn't help but think of all the wonderful times and conversations he had shared with Mary. Rather than make a big spectacle of her adultery, he decided that would divorce her quietly. That would put an end to the family friction, at least. The friction in his heart, though, would never cease. He whispered to himself, "Within a few days, all of this will blow over and then I can move on with my life. Maybe God has another woman out there for me somewhere."

He thought of some of the Scripture stories; of how God often worked the best stories out of the worst circumstances.

"Tomorrow, I will write the bill of divorcement and give it to Mary's father. Her father will fill out the rest of the forms and take it to the priests. And I'll never have to talk to Mary every again."

Out of sheer emotional exhaustion, Joseph fell asleep in the early morning hours.

It was around 4:00AM when an angel appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Then the angel left and he immediately awoke. Outside his window, the sun was slowly rising over the hills. He wiped the sweat from his brow and his heart was beating quickly.

He looked around the room as several thoughts raced through his head: “What is this? Does God not know how difficult this will be? If I do this thing, I will be admitting that the child is mine. What about my parents? They have stood by me this whole time, saying I was innocent of “humbling Mary”. If I go ahead and marry Mary now, my parents may never speak to me again. I would bring shame upon my family.

How do I even go about telling my parents: “Oh, well, the child inside of Mary really isn’t mine, but, I really love her and God told me I should marry her because the child is really conceived by God himself.” That kind of conviction doesn’t just make one “crazy” and “stupid” with one’s family; it makes one a blasphemer in their eyes, saying God did something when, in fact, He didn’t. But, I know I what I saw. God wants me to marry her and He has already picked a name for the child: Jesus.

“Jesus,” he let the name pierce the room.

He could here a few birds chirping in the distance. He stood up and began to pace the room back and forth: “What about Mary’s parents? By taking Mary as my wife now, her dad would be vindicated and he would still blame me for defiling his daughter and his family name.

If I do this thing, our whole family will be despised and rejected by everyone around us. I will be called a fornicator and stupid, whereas Mary will be called an harlot and a blasphemer. But, God knows the truth and Mary knows the truth. And, I’ve just been told.

“If I marry her, there will be no turning back,” he whispered.

He looked out the window and saw the sun rising slowly over the treetops.

I will be throwing away my family name, my reputation, my friends, my family and my parents. They will all ridicule me. But, in the eyes of God and Mary, I would be loving and strong and obedient. I have to do the right thing; this baby could change history.

“I would finally be living out everything that I’ve been taught to be. For the first time in my life I feel like a hero. I would be doing something great for God; a sacrifice.

Joseph decided right there, with the sun peeking through the window, that he would do God’s will and stay married to Mary. The anxiety, the anguish and the tears all vanished away.

He looked around at his unfinished room. It was still the early morning hours. He felt like a new man. It felt like he was in a new world. In his heart, he knew everything would be OK. It was almost too good to be true. He could still be married to Mary and he would be doing God’s will!

Sure, it wouldn’t be easy, but the assurance of doing God’s will—nothing could compare to that. Joseph loved God before, but by obeying him in this difficult task it made him feel like one of the heroes of old—Moses, David, Samuel. He would be embarking on the journey of a lifetime—and the rewards would be so great. All the pain and anguish would pale in comparison to the rewards.

He immediately opened the door, and walked across town to Mary’s house. Her father answered behind the cracked door, “What do you want this early in the morning?”

Joseph said, “I am going to keep Mary as my wife. An angel visited me in a dream and told me that I need to do this, regardless of your approval. I love her and I will take care of her for the rest of my days.” Before her father could speak, Mary ran under her father’s

arm and hugged Joseph in the street.

“Oh, I love you, Joseph! How could you do this for me?”

“Mary, I could only do this with God’s help. He has shown me the truth of that baby inside of you. His name is Jesus and He will get us through this.”

They glanced back at her father, still standing in the doorway. He slowly closed the door.

Later that day, they walked through the oliveyards, hand in hand, talking about all the wonderful things that God had in store for them and what kind of baby this would be.

Mary knew what kind of man she fell in love with. She would finally be able to witness the strong love Joseph had for God in obeying Him.

Joseph looked down at Mary’s hand in his and thanked God.

The end



Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

—Matthew 1:18-25

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST



What is the Gospel?

The gospel is the undeserved salvation of all mankind from sin and eternal death, accomplished only by the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ of which is made real to an individual's heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the gospel is God's plan to rescue us, sustain us and grow us up in Him for all eternity. The famous passage John 3:16 explains the gospel:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

The gospel's foundation is only based upon what Jesus has done; not what we have done. It is God's free gift to us. Heaven is for those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior. People think that getting to heaven is some long, drawn-out process in which you have to try and follow the Ten Commandments or be a do-gooder or go to church or something. But it's really not complicated at all. See, salvation isn't about getting to God on our own terms or pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps, it's about God reaching down to us and offering us salvation free of charge.

Paul says in Ephesians, *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"* —Ephesians 2:4-5

Our sins won't allow us to get to heaven on our own terms; it is only God's rich mercy that He has made a way for us. God demands no less than perfection, and only perfect people get to go to heaven. Based on works, none of us would make it; only Jesus would. But, God has provided a way to give perfection to us through Jesus. Jesus is the exclusive, one-way to the Father. He says this in John 14:6:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Either that statement is true or it is not. Every Christian knows that it is absolutely and irrevocably true. Ask Christ to reveal himself to you today. It's your choice.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Robert H. Flores has been telling stories since early childhood. He is a graduate of Riverside Community College and has worked as a graphic designer for almost 20 years. He enjoys writing stories and sharing the gospel in creative ways. He is the author several books, booklets and tracts. He lives in Southern California with his wife, Jennifer, and three children.



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JOSEPH OF NAZARETH
IS A SHORT STORY THAT
EXPLORES THE BACKGROUND
OF WHAT KIND OF MAN
JESUS' EARTHLY FATHER
WAS. IT IS A DRAMATIZED
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